

II. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Draft 2001 RTP Update is to present a transportation plan that enjoys regional consensus through its flexibility and recognition of the unique nature of the region, yet also meets Federal and State requirements. In a federally designated non-attainment and maintenance areas, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) require that the region submit a regional transportation plan (RTP) every three years. The RTP must meet a number of requirements, one of which that it cover a period of at least 20 years into the future. This Draft 2001 RTP Update covers the period 2001-2025. Transportation investments in the SCAG region, which receive Federal transportation funds must be consistent with the RTP and must be included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) when ready for funding. The RTIP complements the corresponding years of the RTP and must be updated every two years for funding. SCAG's RTIP is a six-year program.

Concurrent with adoption of the 1998 RTP, the Regional Council directed SCAG staff to work to develop consensus on a number of key issues in the next RTP update. Staff initiated a process immediately following the adoption of the 1998 RTP to carry out this directive. The key issues were:

- growth forecasts
- finance
- the future of airports in the region and
- operations and maintenance needs of existing system

These issues are discussed in detail in this document, along with other issues associated with the investments recommended in this Draft 2001 RTP Update.

This Draft 2001 RTP Update is available for public review and comment over the next 60 days during which time a number of issues will continue to be analyzed. The schedule for adoption of the final 2001 RTP Update includes extensive public outreach, adoption by the Regional Council in April 2001 and approval of the region's transportation conformity determination by the FHWA and FTA no later than June 8, 2001. The conformity determination on the 1998 RTP expires on that day. In order to continue receiving Federal transportation funds for other than a limited set of projects, the region must have a conforming RTP in place by June 2001. It is important to note that the planning process is continuous and the RTP is not a static document. Rather, it provides a framework for investments and must be updated again no later than 3 years from the federal approval of the conformity determination.

In July 2000, SCAG released Moving Forward, a discussion document intended to elicit input from stakeholders on the development of the Draft 2001 RTP Update. Input from several stakeholder

groups was received and SCAG has made every effort to consider the suggestions, ideas and concerns of those stakeholders in this Draft 2001 RTP Update.

Organization of this Document

Transportation Planning Framework

We begin by discussing the transportation planning framework in the region, including regional goals, planning principles and objectives. Next, we discuss the performance measures used in the SCAG region, which were originally used in the development of the 1998 RTP. The performance measures have been refined by the Task Force efforts and have provided the underpinning for development of this Draft 2001 RTP Update. The transportation planning process is then discussed including State and Federal requirements, the bottom-up process used in the development of this draft and SCAG's public outreach and environmental justice programs. The Appendix to this document includes additional information on public outreach opportunities and outreach efforts related to SCAG's environmental justice procedures.

Planning Assumptions

This section of the Draft 2001 RTP Update discusses the regional setting in 2000 and SCAG forecasts for 2025. Five key areas are discussed:

- population
- employment and the economy
- household growth and housing
- transportation demand, baseline investments and the role of transit
- transportation and air quality conformity

The purpose of this section is to provide the context for deciding upon transportation investments in the region based upon SCAG's demographic and economic forecasts for the future. SCAG forecasts are the best available information at this time and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Strategic Investments to Achieve Regional Goals

This section of the Draft 2001 RTP Update provides an overview of the setting today for each modal alternative, issues associated with managing future demand for that mode, and recommendations and alternative investments in that transportation mode. Included in this section are highways/major arterials/local streets; intelligent transportation systems; public transit; goods movement including ports and rail freight; aviation and ground access to airports; transportation demand management and non-motorized transportation modes. This section provides the core of the Draft 2001 RTP Update and is derived from the application of performance measures to proposed investments. A detailed project listing of

recommended investments and alternative included in the Appendix which also contains the detailed assessments of investments based upon these performance measures.

Financial Plan

This section of the document describes the financial capacity of the region to fund investments that are included in the Draft 2001 RTP Update and was guided by the Transportation and Communications Committee's adoption of principles and funding assumptions in August 2000. In addition, this section includes strategies for identifying and securing new revenues which are needed to make the 2001 RTP Update a financially constrained plan as well as to meet Federal requirements in this regard. A breakdown of financial data at the county level, as well as supporting data for the technical analysis is presented in the Appendix.

Plan Performance

This section includes performance analysis of the proposed plan based on regional performance goals such as mobility, accessibility, reliability, safety and cost effectiveness. This section also includes current information on air quality in the region, our commitments to reduce mobile sources of emissions and a review of the transportation measures included in this Draft 2001 RTP Update and their air quality impacts. An environmental justice analysis is also presented in this section.

Future Link

This section identifies transportation corridors that should be preserved to expand or enhance transportation for future generations. Ideally, the long-range corridors will encourage planners and policy-makers to start preparing strategies for preserving corridors now.

Monitoring Our Progress

This section describes our regional plan monitoring programs and tools.

Where Do We Go From Here?

This section describes future steps towards coordinating and implementing the Regional Transportation Plan.